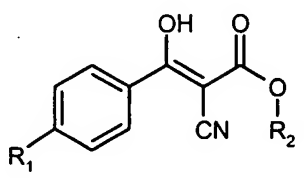
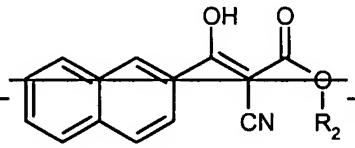
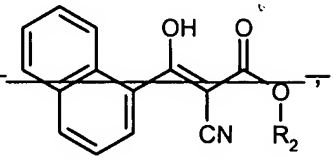
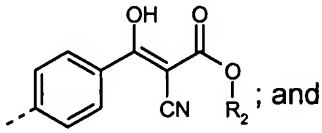
In the Claims:

1. (currently amended) ~~3-aryl-2-cyano-3-hydroxy-acrylic acid derivates~~ Compounds of formula

(1a)  ; ~~(1b)~~  ~~or (1c)~~  ,

wherein

R_1 is ~~hydrogen, C_1-C_{20}alkyl; C_1-C_{20}alkoxy; CF_3;~~ C_6-C_{10}aryl; or a radical of

formula ($1a_1$)  ; and

R_2 is hydrogen; or C_1-C_{20}alkyl.

2. (original) Compounds of formula (1a) according to claim 1, wherein

R_1 is C_6-C_{10}aryl.

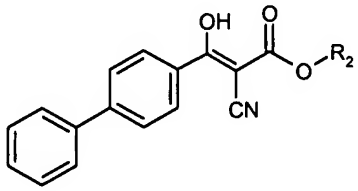
3. (previously presented) Compounds according to claim 1, wherein

R_1 is phenyl.

4. (previously presented) Compounds according to claim 1, wherein

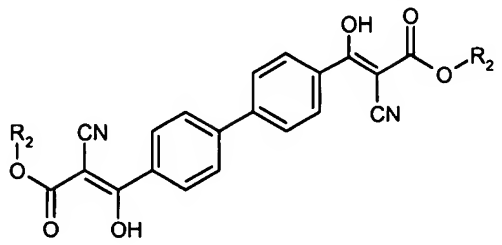
R_2 is C_1-C_{20}alkyl.

5. (previously presented) Compounds according to claim 1, which correspond to formula

(2)  , wherein

R_2 is C_1-C_{20}alkyl.

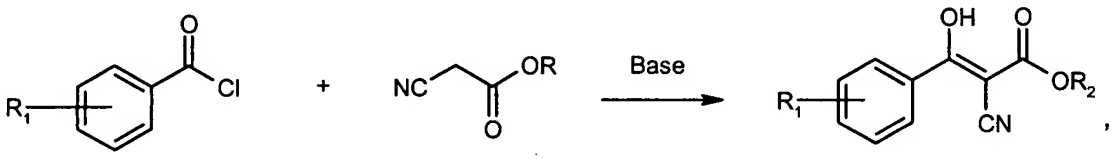
6. (previously presented) Compounds according to claim 1, which correspond to formula

(3)  , wherein

R_2 is C_1-C_{20}alkyl.

7. (cancelled)

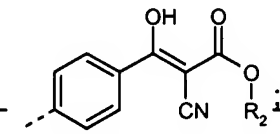
8. (currently amended) Process for the preparation of the compounds of formula (1a) according to claim 1, which comprises condensing the cyanoacetate of formula (1b) with the carbon acid chloride of formula (1a') to the compound of formula (1a) according to the following reaction scheme:



(1a') (1b) (1a)

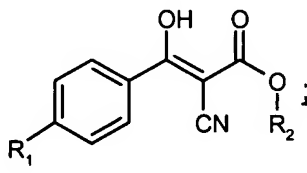
wherein

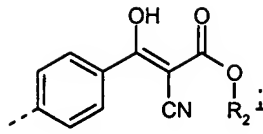
~~R_1 and R_2 are defined as in claim 1~~

R_1 is C_6-C_{10}aryl; or a radical of formula (1a$_1$)  ; and

R_2 is hydrogen; or C_1-C_{20}alkyl.

9. (currently amended) A method for the antimicrobial treatment of surfaces, which comprises treating said surfaces with an antimicrobially effective amount of a compound of ~~formulae (1a), (1b) or (1c) according to claim 1.~~formula

(1a)  ; wherein

R_1 is C_6-C_{10}aryl; or a radical of formula (1a$_1$)  ; and

R_2 is hydrogen; or C_1-C_{20}alkyl.

10. (currently amended) A method according to claim 9 for the antimicrobial treatment, deodorisation and disinfection of the skin, mucosa or hair, which comprises treating said skin, mucosa or hair with an antimicrobially effective amount of a compound of formulae (1a). ~~, (1b) or (1c) according to claim 1.~~

11. (currently amended) A method according to claim 9, ~~10, wherein treatment with the compound of formulae (1a), (1b) or (1c) results in~~ which comprises the prevention of the adhesion of bacteria on surfaces and the further forming of biofilms and detaching the biofilm and/or the inhibition of the growth of biofilm-forming microorganisms in a biological matrix or killing them.

12. (previously presented) A method according to claim 9, wherein textile fibre materials are treated.

13. (currently amended) A method according to claim 9, wherein the compound of formula **[[**e]] (1a) ~~, (1b) or (1c) are used in preservation~~ is applied as a preservative.

14. (currently amended) A method according to claim 9, wherein the compound of formula **[[**e]] (1a), ~~(1b) or (1c)~~ is incorporated into washing and cleaning formulations.

15. (currently amended) A method according to claim 9, wherein the compound of formula **[[**e]] (1a), ~~(1b) or (1c) results in~~ which comprises imparting antimicrobial properties to, and preserving, plastics, paper, nonwovens, wood or leather.

16.(currently amended) A method according to claim 9, wherein the compound~~s~~ of formula **[[**e]] (1a), ~~(1b) or (1c) results in~~ which comprises imparting antimicrobial properties to, and preserving technical products.

17. (cancelled)

18.(currently amended) A personal care preparation comprising from 0.01 to 15 % by weight, based on the total weight of the composition, of a compound of formula **[[**e]] (1a) according to claim 1, ~~(1b) or (1c)~~ and cosmetically tolerable adjuvants.

19.(currently amended) An oral composition comprising from 0.01 to 15 % by weight, based on the total weight of the composition, of a compound of formula [[e]] (1a) according to claim 1, ~~(1b) or (1c),~~ and orally tolerable adjuvants.